

they have struggled to recoup their losses. This bill provides important protections to individuals and small businesses, and I support its passage.

CONGRATULATING ASU-SEARCY
ON 50 YEARS

HON. J. FRENCH HILL

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 28, 2016

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, today I congratulate Arkansas State University-Beebe's Searcy Campus on its 50th anniversary.

Formerly Foothills Vocational Technical School, the Searcy campus opened in 1966 with 17 employees.

Dedicated in 1967 by Governor Winthrop Rockefeller, the focus of the campus was to provide its students with a skilled trade that would prepare them to enter the workforce upon graduation.

In 2003, Foothills Technical Institute merged with ASU-Beebe, forming its second technical campus.

Today, the Searcy campus serves both traditional and non-traditional students earning their GEDs, technical certificates, or associate degrees, providing many students with the skills, education, and training necessary to obtain employment and start a career.

I would like to extend my congratulations to ASU-Beebe's Searcy campus and wish it much continued success for generations to come.

THE MEDIGAP CONSUMER
PROTECTION ACT OF 2016

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 28, 2016

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, Medigap plans currently provide supplemental coverage to approximately 11 million Medicare beneficiaries. However, many of the laws governing the Medigap market have remained largely unchanged since 1990. In particular, consumer protections are inadequate, leaving many beneficiaries subject to discriminatory practices by issuers, lacking sufficient information about their plan options, and often enrolled in lower quality coverage.

That is why, today, I am introducing the Medigap Consumer Protection Act. This important legislation will make a number of reforms to the Medigap market that will strengthen the health security of millions of Americans and significantly improve the beneficiary experience.

Most importantly, this bill ends discriminatory treatment of Medicare beneficiaries by extending guaranteed issue rights to the entire Medigap-eligible population.

Currently, federal law provides limited guaranteed issue rights to Medicare beneficiaries. As a result, issuers in many states are permitted to deny consumers access to Medigap policies based on preexisting conditions. This creates substantial barriers to coverage, particularly for individuals who qualify for Medicare due to disability or End-Stage Renal Dis-

ease. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, only 2 percent of beneficiaries who are under 65 and living with a disability are enrolled in a Medigap policy, and 21 percent have no supplemental coverage at all.

The Medigap Consumer Protection Act closes the holes in federal law that permit discriminatory treatment of consumers by extending guaranteed issue rights to the entire Medicare population, including beneficiaries who qualify for Medicare due to disability or End-Stage Renal Disease.

It also will protect a number of other populations, including beneficiaries who have enrolled in Medicare Advantage for more than one year and wish to switch back to traditional Medicare; dual eligibles who either lose their Medicaid coverage or who are only Medicaid-eligible with a Share of Cost; and individuals enrolled in COBRA coverage who wish to switch into Medicare.

The bill also makes a number of reforms that will strengthen access to quality plans and improve the beneficiary experience.

It calls on the National Association of Insurance Commissioners to review loss ratio standards for Medigap plans and submit recommendations to the Secretary to update federal standards.

It reforms how issuers price their products by calling on the NAIC to update its Model Regulations to prohibit pricing discrimination based on age, and by requiring Medigap issuers to set premiums by county.

It requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to improve the Medicare Plan Finder website to increase consumer access to information regarding their coverage options through Medicare, Medigap, Medicare Advantage, and Part D. The public will be afforded opportunities to comment on and improve the presentation of this information.

It restores access to the most popular Medigap plan options, which under current law are scheduled to be eliminated for beneficiaries who become eligible for Medicare beginning in 2020 or later.

Finally, it provides consumers with additional information about potential conflicts of interest by requiring issuers to disclose payments made to brokers, agents, and other third parties selling Medigap policies. These disclosures will be available to consumers through the Open Payments Database maintained by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Mr. Speaker, Medicare beneficiaries deserve access to high-quality Medigap coverage. The reforms made by the Medigap Consumer Protection Act will correct many of the problems that continue to exist in the market, including discrimination by issuers and a lack of information available to consumers. These reforms are long overdue, and I urge my colleagues to move to enact this bill without delay.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE LA PORTE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 28, 2016

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize La Porte Independent School District,

which celebrates its 100th Anniversary on October 1, 2016.

In 1916, only 19 years after the first classroom opened in La Porte, the Independent School District was established to provide quality education to students from Lomax to Morgan's Point. These first students had the privilege of choosing both the District's mascot and colors—the bulldog, and the orange and white that the students of La Porte rally around to this day.

Over 7,000 students from across La Porte began their school year within the Independent School District just weeks ago, and will continue a proud legacy of learning and achievement that has stood for 100 years.

It is my distinct honor to recognize and celebrate the 100th Anniversary of La Porte ISD, and their enduring commitment to every student's success. Go Bulldogs.

RECOGNIZING RICHARD GEIGER
FOR HIS LIFELONG SERVICE
AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

HON. DEREK KILMER

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 28, 2016

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and legacy of Richard Geiger, a champion for the environment. Mr. Geiger is widely recognized as one of the most committed advocates for the protection and stewardship of our natural resources in the Puget Sound region.

A graduate of Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA, Rich began his career by serving our country in the 82nd Airborne Division as an air defense officer. After serving for 13 years, during which time he was stationed in North Korea and Germany, he continued that commitment to service by dedicating his civilian career to protecting the environment.

First working for Mason County Public Works, and then for the last 15 years as a district officer at the Mason Conservation District, Rich helped to develop a wide range of small- and large-scale efforts to protect natural resources. Perhaps his greatest accomplishment during his tenure with the Conservation District was the leadership he provided on the development and implementation of the Skokomish River Basin Ecosystem Restoration Project, a critical and comprehensive effort to restore the river and surrounding waters in Puget Sound that encompassed more than 50 different individual restoration projects.

Mr. Speaker, Richard was not only an environmental advocate and steward, he was also a leader in the community. He excelled at fostering collaboration and consensus among diverse community stakeholders, including private landowners, businesses, Native American Tribes, and local, state, and federal agencies, to achieve common goals.

Richard's lifetime of service, stewardship, care, and leadership all contributed to a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant community in Puget Sound. The contributions of Mr. Geiger embody the values that make our community and our country a great place to live.

Mr. Speaker, I stand on the House floor today to honor the life of Mr. Geiger and to extend my condolences to those who he is survived by. Our lives are enhanced by having known him, and he will truly be missed.